

NSC BRIEFING

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18 April 1955

BACKGROUND--AFGHAN ROYAL FAMILY

- I. 1834--Amir Dost Mohammad founded present royal family.
 - A. 1919--Habibullah, last of Amirs, whose power was circumscribed by treaties with British India, dies. Amanullah, great-great-grandson of Dost Mohammad, takes throne. He achieved independence for Afghanistan.
 1. Incurred hostility of religious and tribal leaders by his attempts to free women from veil and foster feminine education.
 2. He neglected to maintain Army and, when revolt broke out in 1928, was unable to rally strong support.
 3. Tribal elements, led by a peasant leader (Bacha-i-Saqao) occupied Kabul and the central government disintegrated.
 - B. 1929--Amanullah abdicates, flees to exile in Italy where he now lives.
 1. He is now 62 years old.
 - C. 1929--Mohammad Nadir Shah, descendant of a brother of Dost Mohammad, re-establishes central authority.
 1. He instituted some reforms: constitution was adopted, banking system created, system of government monopolies established (which provided funds for road building, irrigation and power projects). 10

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2. One of five brothers, he was assassinated in 1933.

D. 1933--Mohammad Zahir Shah, son of Nadir, takes throne.

1. He has continued policies of his father and is advised by same associates.

2. He is 41 years old: retiring personality: doesn't enter openly into Afghan political life.

II. Other members of royal family include:

A. Shah Mahmud Khan, one of two surviving brothers of late King Nadir, uncle of present King and of Prime Minister Daud.

1. He is 67 years old and a former Prime Minister, (resigned 6 Sept. '53).

2. Considered pro-US, pro-UK, and has considerable influence with Afghan tribes.

B. Shah Wali Khan, the other surviving brother of late King Nadir and about 67 years old.

1. Now in Afghanistan, but holds no official position.

2. His wife is a sister of ex-King Amanullah.

C. Mohammad Daud Khan, a cousin of, and married to a sister of, present King (Father, one of King's uncles, murdered in Berlin in '33).

1. Succeeded uncle Mahmud as prime minister in September 1953.

2. Had previously been Minister of War, Interior, Communications and Tribes; also has held various diplomatic posts.

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3. Daud is 46 years old, has impetuous, headstrong personality.

4. An ardent pro-Pushtoonistan leader, he instigated recent riots against Pakistan and has advocated closer economic relations with the Soviet Union.

D. Mohammad Naim Khan, a cousin of, and married to a sister of, present King, is a brother of Prime Minister Daud.

1. Is deputy prime minister, foreign minister.

2. Is 44 years old, intelligent, conservative, pro-West, but not forceful personality.

3. At present, Naim is leader of Afghan delegation to Bandung Conference.